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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Experimental Schools Project in New Hampshire School Supervisory Union 58 was to effect change within an existing school system, create new instructional programs to affect student awareness and knowledge, relate school to community and the instructional process to total life-space environment, and document variables affecting change. Developed for a rural school system serving about 1,100 students in three school districts, the five-year, K-12 program integrated three major curriculum components: career/vocational education (Career Awareness Program lessons, field trips, guest speakers, guidance, minicourses, worksite), language arts (Scott, Foresman series, skills list, "kids' corner"), and outdoor/environmental education (Student Environmental Awareness lessons, field trips, guest speakers, outing clubs, lab sites). The community was involved through community-based classrooms, field trips, instructors, advisory board, and special committees. To determine program effect on career awareness and identify variables which affect career decision making, two short-term longitudinal studies were done; inservice training was evaluated by consultants and teachers. Variables identified as directly affecting curriculum development and ongoing instruction were time, staff, administrative leadership, funds, materials, facilities, evaluation, inservice training, scheduling, and enrichment experiences. (RS)

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Instructional Program Development in a Rural Experimental School System

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FORWARD

In July 1973 the National Institute of Education, Washington, DC, initiated its multi-year Experimental Schools (ES) project in New Hampshire School Supervisory Union 58[1].

The local ES project was charged with comprehensive program planning - development - implementation - evaluation - revision - process documentation and monitoring - and related teacher in-service training in career education, language arts, and environmental/outdoor education. The affect of this process: to create a continuous, integrated, and sequential program of instruction for students -- with career education and environmental/outdoor education related (in concepts, content, skills, and strategies) to language arts and other subject matter areas of the curriculum, e.g., art, mathematics, music, physical education, science, and the social studies.

The Union 58 Experimental Schools project was operational from July 1, 1973 through June 30, 1978.

BEGINNINGS

During the course of the 1971-1972 school year the National Institute of Education announced its rural schools oriented Experimental Schools program and requested proposals for funding from rural school systems across America.

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[1]New Hampshire School Supervisory Union 58 is a rural school system serving a student body of approximately 1,100 (K-12) with a faculty/staff of sixty-five. Union 58 is comprised of three autonomous school districts: Northumberland, Stark, and Stratford.

In 1972 School Union 58 received word that its proposal had been selected for further study. A project planning year grant was received and during the course of the 1972-1973 school year local school system personnel, students, and community members were involved in a needs assessment survey and program development activities.

On July 1st (1973) the local ES project officially began its operations in School Union 58. The local ES project was one of ten such R & D programs funded by the National Institute of Education.[2]

COMPONENTS: Overview

I. Career/Vocational Education

Emphasis on the development of an awareness and skills oriented instructional program (K-12) with the incorporation of community resources; both people and places, into the education process. An attempt to develop relevancy and continuity between that which the individual learns in school and his/her later employment and community involvement.

II. Language Arts

To provide for a continuous, integrated, and sequential program of skills instruction relevant to the interests and needs of students. To provide students

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[2]The ES project sites were located in Alaska, Arizona, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming.

(of all abilities) the opportunity for self-pacing, to meet personal needs, and to achieve success.

III. Environmental/Outdoor Education

A process of student awareness and exposure to the total life space environment; that is, to natural, social, and human life space phenomena. A K-12 classroom/field based program to affect students' attitudes, awareness, behavior, learning, perceptions, and values re: their life space environment, and a weekend outing club program which provided an introduction to natural surroundings -- in order to enhance leisure-time activities and recreation among students.

IV. Teacher In-Service Training

An on-going process of teacher awareness, exposure to and involvement with career education, language arts revision, and environmental/outdoor education program development. The use of *workshops*, *minishops* and *skillshops*[3] as well as field trips, guest speakers, material displays, and visitations to affect attitudes and perceptions of the K-12 faculty and staff re: curriculum change.

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[3] workshops: All-day and half-day release time sessions which provide opportunities for skills development, materials construction, how-to-do-it techniques, as well as lesson development and curriculum writing.
minishops: Two hour-or-less long enrichment activities concerned with materials introduction and how-to-do-it demonstrations.
skillshops: Follow-up to workshops geared toward skills enrichment and hands-on experiences/training.

COMPONENT

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

I. Career/Vocational Education

.To provide for a perceptual enrichment process - to acquaint students with a broad spectrum of present and future employment opportunities.

.To provide in-school and on-the-job training opportunities which enhance student skills development in a variety of occupational areas.

.To incorporate human and natural resources into the curriculum (K-12).

II. Language Arts

.To develop a language arts curriculum which insures individual responsibility and accountability for learning activities and decisions.

.To develop learning situations which allow for and encourage individual self-pacing from level-to-level with the K-12 structure on a limited, selected activity basis.

.To create a success-oriented language arts curriculum which enhances the development of positive learner self-images.

III. Environmental/Outdoor Education

.To develop physical site areas which provide students (K-12) opportunities to study the interrelationship(s) existent between human and natural components of the community.

.To provide the opportunity for student and community involvement in a weekend outdoor education program.

.To provide classroom and on-site learning activities which enhance the individual's perceptions of the natural environment and man's relationship(s) to it.

.To provide classroom and on-site learning activities and experiences which will enhance the development of the individual's skills in communications, decision-making, and problem solving, and enhance a sense of SELF as related to social interaction situations.

ESTABLISHED PROGRAMS

Beginning with the 1973-1974 school year and continuing through the 1977-1978 school year ES project personnel and Union 58 faculty/staff were involved in developing, implementing, and evaluating instructional programs in career education, language arts, and environmental/outdoor education.

Career/Vocational Education

Career education is not a course of study but rather an on-going *process of becoming* because every human being is in flux. Each and everyday, the individual is bombarded by natural and social forces which affect and mold attitudes, behaviors, competencies, interests, and values. Career education begins at an early age in the life of the child with the development of an *awareness* for diverse careers and occupations, proceeds systematically through stages of *exploration, counseling and guidance, decision-making,* and *skills training* -- to the culmination of this process, *job placement.*

In the final analysis, career education must be personalized; that is related to the uniqueness of the individual re:

content, concept, and skills development, because it is a process of preparation for life. At some point along the process development continuum there must be provided opportunities for SELF development re: personal abilities, interests, and values.

1. Career Awareness Program (CAP Lessons:

   A total of one hundred and fourteen (114) locally developed lessons geared to classroom instruction and to community based studies at local resource sites.

2. Field Trips:

   Excursions into the community which provide opportunities for students to explore the world of work in real work environments.

3. Guest Speakers:

   For those sites, people, and processes not readily accessible to students, community resource people visit classrooms to discuss their careers and occupations and related educational preparation/skills training requirements.

4. Guidance:

   Individual students and small groups meet with counselors to discuss their career interests as well as job related attitudes, behaviors, and values.

5. Mini Courses:

   Elective courses (usually ten weeks long) related to student skills development in vocational areas,

e.g., building trades, cake decorating, small engine repair, and surveying.

6. Worksites:

Placement and supervision of students at local community resource sites for purposes of vocational skills training and application in real work conditions. Skilled site workers serve as student skills training supervisors. Community resource sites and people supplement the instructional faculty and process of the school(s).

Language Arts

In order to successfully interact with other people and to function within given social groups, it is necessary for the individual to have mastered certain skills; namely, the ability to comprehend, to communicate and express oneself, and to interpret the real world within a perceptual context of personal meaning and understanding.

Basic to all academic and social learning are certain language arts skills, e.g., speaking (encoding), writing, listening, reading, and interpreting (decoding).

1. Scott, Foresman Series:

A leveled Kindergarten through grade nine program which emphasizes skills development along the learning continuum and provides opportunities for student self-pacing and achievement. Materials applicable to slow-average-accelerated student abilities and interests.

2. Skills List:

A Kindergarten through grade six language arts skills development format which provides for acquisition and enrichment, and takes into account the maturational level of students at each grade level.

3. Kid's Corner:

Periodically published collections of student materials, e.g., short stories, poems, puzzles, and pictures. An opportunity for students to express themselves in a variety of creative ways and to communicate with peers.

Environmental/Outdoor Education

Man interacts with both natural and social environmental phenomena on a day-to-day basis. Interaction alone is not enough, if we are to intelligently conserve, manage, and protect our natural and human resources.

As a result of exposure to and direct involvement with an environmental education program students better perceive the need to conserve finite resources, to protect the quality of human and non-human life, to manage wisely the utilization of valuable human resources, to plan future land use policies, to control human population growth and distribution, and to participate actively in the continuous campaign to improve human life styles in social environments.

1. Student Environmental Awareness (SEA) Lessons:

A total of one hundred and twenty-five (K-12) lessons developed locally for classroom and field based instruction.

2. Field Trips:

   Excursions into the life space environment providing students with opportunities to study natural and social environments.

3. Guest Speakers:

   Community resource people meet with students in classrooms and at sites within the environment to discuss EE concepts, content or skills.

4. Outing Clubs:

   Weekend one-day activities (daytrips) or overnight camping/hiking trips which expose students to natural phenomena existent within the total life space environment.

5. Lab Sites:

   Selected areas within the life space environment which are used as sites for student studies and investigations of the natural surroundings.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Both community people and resource sites have been incorporated into the local ES project and its resultant programs of instruction.

1. Community-based Classrooms:

   Selected resources have served as off-campus sites for student awareness, to effect exposure, and as the basis for skills development and application in certain academic and vocational areas.

2. Field Trip Sites:

   Students tour selected resource sites for purposes of awareness, exposure and concept/skills development.

3. Instructors:

   Selected community resource people serve as guest speakers, field trip chaperones and site guides, mini course instructors, and worksite supervisors.

4. ESP Advisory Board:

   The recommending organ of the local ES project made up of teacher, student, and community representation.

5. Special Committees:

   Community participation in several activities related to specific aspects of the ES project, e.g., vocational craft committees, curriculum committees, and public relations committees.

LEVEL I EVALUATION

During the course of the 1974-1975 and 1975-1976 school years the project's Level I Evaluation component staff conducted two short term longitudinal studies for purposes of determining instructional program effect on career awareness and to identify variables affecting career maturity vis-a-vis decision-making.

The Career Awareness Inventory (CAI), publish by Scholastic Testing Service, and CTB/McGraw-Hill's Career Maturity Inventory (CMI) were used as data collection instruments.[4]

[4]Reference to The Utilization of Natural, Social, and Human Community Resources in the Process of Student Career Awareness Development (1976) and A Process for Affecting Student Career Maturity Development in a Rural Schools System (1976) by Richard O. Peters and L. Timothy Fisher, Experimental Schools Project, NH Union 58.

Results of the CAI study involving two hundred and thirty-two (232) fifth through seventh grade students indicated that:

1. the occupational awareness growth of students can be attributed, in part, to career education program activities with which they are directly involved;
2. the occupational awareness growth of students can be attributed, in part, to both the quantity (number) and quality of career education program activities; and
3. the occupational awareness growth of students can be significantly effected by classroom teachers.

One hundred and forty-one (141) students in grades four through six were involved in the CMI pre/post treatment study. Several CMI attitude scale statements were extracted from the context of the instrument for further study. These statements were grouped into three categories: *abilities*, *reward/status*, and *significant others*, and analyzed. The results of that analysis indicated that:

1. students deem it important to know what kind of persons they are when choosing careers;
2. Students realize that personal abilities and interests are critical factors in determining whether one is suited to a job and can successfully accomplish job related tasks;
3. students believe that knowing what kind of persons they are, working hard, and knowing what they are good at makes the task of choosing a career occupation a lot easier;

4. students feel that the most important part of work is the pleasure one derives from doing that work; and
5. students feel that what you like to do is more important than what you are good at doing when choosing a career occupation.

Other Level I activities included the documentation of career education and environmental education lesson/unit activities and experiences initiated by classroom teachers. Teachers would periodically document their activities to the ES project office using locally developed *green slip* documentation/evaluation forms. In-service training program activities were evaluated by teacher and consultants re: stated goals and objectives, and students evaluated the instructional value of mini courses and worksite experiences.

VARIABLES

As a result of Experimental Schools (ES) project activities and experiences in New Hampshire School Supervisory Union 58 several factors (or variables) have been identified which have direct affect upon the processes of curriculum development and on-going instruction.

1. Curriculum Development

   When considering affecting change in an existent instructional program attention should be paid to:

   .TIME

   When planning for change there is a need to provide blocks of ample time for goals/objectives attainment. Time is the foundation upon which well thought

through programs are based. To rush the process of change without proper planning, adequate resources, and stated purpose is to doom the success of that attempt from the start.

.STAFF

There is a need to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the instructional/support staff in order to determine each person's proper role in the process of change. How can each individual best contribute his or her abilities and expertise to the process? When is it the right time to introduce a given individual into the on-going change process?

.ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP

Whether at the building level or at the central office level there is a need for the school system administration to exert leadership re: the change process. Administrators must serve as change agents within the local system -- in support of curriculum development.

.AVAILABLE FUNDS

When planning for change attention must be paid to the costs involved. Careful analysis of needs as related to costs must be undertaken early in the planning phase and must be periodically conducted during the course of the change process.

.MATERIALS

In order to implement planned change there is a need to provide necessary instructional hardware/ software to students and teachers alike. Media

resource rooms provide facilities within schools where needed hardware/software can be stored and are readily availalbe for use. When selecting instructional materials consideration must be given to the total range of student abilities, interests and needs at any given grade level or range of grades.

.FACILITIES

An assessment needs to be made of existing physical plant instructional facilities. Do current facilities lend themselves to planned change? Is there a need to plan for additional instructional facilities? What facilities are needed in order to accomodate change?

For schools with limited facilities and insufficient funds to provide additional space/materials an alternative format to facilities expansion might be the incorporation of community resources; both people and places, into both the change and instructional processes.

.EVALUATION

In order to determine whether change has achieved stated goals and objectives, as well as to determine effect upon instruction, there is need to evaluate and revise efforts.

Evaluation can be statistical or subjective in nature. Whatever the technique used there is need to continually

provide feedback re: effect and progress, to decision makers and change agents, e.g., administrators, teachers, consultants.

.IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Everyone needs to periodically update their subject matter knowledge and skills.

In-service training should be an on-going process geared to the strengths and weaknesses of staff members. Training should be aimed at making good teachers better.

2. On-Going Instruction

Many of the factors or variables discussed in relation to curriculum development equally apply to the continuous, integrated, and sequential process of student learning and inquiry called instruction -- whether it takes place within or outside the school.

.TIME

How is the school day organized? Is sufficient time allotted for instruction in the several subject matter areas? Has sufficient time been made available for planned change to occur? Is time available for student learning outside the school?

.STAFF

In addition to determining the strengths and weaknesses of each teacher re: the instructional process, there is also need to provide the personnel who will daily affect the process of change; namely, coordinators, supervisors, and subject matter area consultants.

Community resource people can be integrated into the school's instructional staff and can teach/ supervise both in schools and at community resource sites.

.ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP

Building principals and central office personnel must serve in the capacity of instructional resource people. They must work with teachers in planning for change and need to continually provide encouragement to staffs vis-a-vis change.

.MATERIALS

Instructional hardware/software and skills development equipment/tools must be made readily available to students.

Whether housed in the classroom or made available for use from resource rooms or media centers there is a need for students to have direct access to and hands-on experiences with instructional materials. Experience with materials can take place both within schools and at community sites.

.FACILITIES

In addition to classroom space there is a need to incorporate community resources into the instructional process -- if students are to become aware of themselves and others in relation to the total life space environment.

There is a need to relate student instruction and learning experiences to the real world of the community.

There is no adequate substitute for on-the-job training and exposure to the real world of the life space environment.

.SCHEDULING

In order to affect change in the instructional process there is a need to provide adequate time for innovation and experimentation.

If change is to occur within the existing curriculum there is a need to modify the scheduling of current time allotments - thus providing for the introduction of new courses and programs within the context of the prescribed school day.

.EVALUATION

Students must be provided opportunities to assess the value of their learning experiences.

In order to determine the instructional value of curriculum change students must evaluate their experiences vis-a-vis the stated goals and objectives of planned change.

.ENRICHMENT EXPERIENCES

An important way to affect change in the existing program of instruction is to provide concept, content, and skills development opportunities which supplement existing courses of study and enrich both academic and vocational development in the several subject matter areas.

.IN-SERVICE TRAINING

School personnel must periodically enrich their expertise in areas of familiarity, e.g., art, language arts, mathematics, music, science, and social studies, and must be formally introduced to and trained in new subject matter areas being introduced into the curriculum, e.g., career education, environmental education, health education, and sex education.

.THE PROJECT AS A TRAINING PROCESS

In-and-of itself, the local ES project has been a multi-year in-service training process for teachers (K-12).

Exposure to and involvement with ES project activities has helped teachers to discipline themselves in ways related to infusing new programs into existing classroom/building curricula re: career education, language arts, and environmental education.

The *how-to-do-it* infusion training gained from involvement with the local ES project will enable teachers to apply learned infusion skills to other mandated instruction, e.g., drug education, energy education, and health education.

STATEMENT

Since July 1973 New Hampshire School Supervisory Union 58 has been the site of a designed experiment to: 1) affect change within an existing school system, 2) create new instruc-

tional programs for purposes of affecting student awareness and knowledge, 3) relate the school to the community-at-large, 4) relate the instructional process to the total life space environment, and 5) document and monitor the variables which positively and negatively affect the change process within the context of dynamic communities and their schools.